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University of Idaho

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Blue Ribbon Task Force  
c/o Roger Madsen, Director  
Idaho Department of Labor  
Boise, Idaho. 83843

Blue Ribbon Task Force Members:

On behalf on the Idaho Assistive Technology Project (IATP), at the University of Idaho, I am writing in follow-up to my previous letter to request that the Blue Ribbon Task Force *include in its recommendations to the Governor a goal related to assistive technology*. Assistive technology holds tremendous promise for helping our state agencies to save taxpayer dollars and for increasing the independence and productivity of Idahoan's with disabilities and older persons. Assistive technology can be simple or complex. It includes such items as adaptive computer keyboards, reachers, sit-skies, communication technology, kitchen aids and thousands of other commercially available devices.

Among other goals, Governor Kempthorne has asked the Task Force to, "*recommend opportunities for aggressive use of cost-effective technology in order to enhance accessibility and productivity*." As the Task Force considers ways to meet this goal, I would like to suggest a different perspective on how to achieve it - one that emphasizes the potential of assistive technology. Currently, Idaho's Medicaid programs are under-utilizing assistive technology for increasing the independence of older persons and individuals with disabilities. As listed in my previous letter, a number of studies have confirmed that using assistive technology can save taxpayer dollars.

Based on these findings, I urge the Task Force to recommend to Governor Kempthorne that he *maximize the use of assistive technology in Medicaid programs as a means of reducing the rapidly increasing cost of long-term health care*. Thank you for considering this request and I would be glad to travel to Boise to provide additional information about assistive technology to the Task Force. Also, please feel free to contact me with your concerns or questions.

Sincerely,

Ronald Seiler  
Project Director

cc: Kelly Buckland  
Marilyn Sword  
Jim Baugh

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IDAHO DEPT. OF LABOR  
DIRECTOR